



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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**FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS
FORMER DIRECTOR OF KICKAPOO COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton, Enrique G. Fasci, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, Charles "Shep" Harrison, Special Agent in Charge, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Patrick A. Patterson, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation announced that 48-year-old Maricela Mendoza, former director of the Kickapoo Community Health Services in Eagle Pass, Texas, was arrested this morning on charges of theft and money laundering.

Investigators from IRS-CI, ICE, FBI and the U.S. Department of the Interior-Office of Inspector General arrested Mendoza in Eagle Pass without incident.

A federal grand jury on Wednesday returned a three-count indictment against Mendoza charging her with one count of theft from a health care benefit program and two counts of money laundering. The indictment also contains a notice of criminal forfeiture in which the government seeks to collect a monetary judgement in the amount of \$259,081.64.

The indictment alleges that from September 8, 2000, through October 2002, Mendoza stole funds from the Kickapoo Community Health Services, a program established by the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas and funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. According to the indictment, this money was to be used to pay healthcare providers for medical treatment and medications for Kickapoo tribal members.

"The allegations contained in the indictment raise serious questions about the defendant's breach of her fiduciary duty to the members of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe and a betrayal of their trust. Such abuses of positions of authority for one's own personal benefit, at the expense of those who entrusted their health and welfare to that person, will be thoroughly investigated and prosecuted by this office. The victims deserve as much," stated United States Attorney **Johnny Sutton**.

"The theft of money from the Kickapoo Community Health Services represented a theft of necessary health care to the tribal members. IRS-CI is committed to using our expertise to follow the money trail and prosecute the offenders," stated **Enrique G. Fasci**, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation.

“This investigation demonstrates the abilities of federal law enforcement to utilize expertise in a common cause to proactively address suspected money laundering and theft violations relative to the Kickapoo Tribe health care program. The abuse by any official entrusted to administer tribal programs and the funds provided by the federal government will not be tolerated at any level,” stated **Douglas L. Krockenberger**, ICE Associate Special Agent in Charge, San Antonio.

Upon conviction on all charges, Mendoza faces up to 30 years in federal prison. Mendoza is expected to have her initial appearance tomorrow morning before United States Magistrate Judge Dennis Green in Del Rio, Texas.

This ongoing investigation is being conducted by agents from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Department of the Interior-Office of Inspector General, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys William R. Harris and Joe Sepeda.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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